DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Building strong, healthy communities together

STATEMENT OF MANDATE

2011 - 2012

NOVA SCOTIA
Community Services

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister. 3

1.0 Department Mandate. 4

2.0 Government Priorities. 6

3.0 Performance Measures by Outcome. 11

4.0 Budget Context. 18

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER AND DEPUTY MINISTER

On behalf of the Department of Community Services, we are pleased to present the Department of Community Services' 2011-2012 Statement of Mandate. Our plans for the year will build on our vision of economic and social well-being for Nova Scotians. Helping people in need is what we do each and every day. We will focus on improving services to the thousands of people we assist.

The department will make a major investment in the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program, moving toward our goal of increasing economic independence and enhancing social inclusion. This investment will make life better for low income Nova Scotians who rely on government help to make ends meet.

We will also improve supports for low income families in Nova Scotia and invest in our children's future by increasing the Nova Scotia Child Tax Benefit and creating more child care subsidies to help parents. We will continue to deliver funding in a meaningful way that benefits Nova Scotia's children, families and child care professionals.

In 2011 - 2012, we will move forward in our work with our federal, municipal and community partners to meet the housing needs of low income Nova Scotians. Programs like the Affordable Housing Initiative will continue to add additional affordable rental units across the province and create the jobs needed to grow the economy.

Under the Services for Persons with Disabilities program, we are embarking on the development of a strategic plan, providing a roadmap for the future. The plan will be informed by consultation with the disability community. We will also take steps to provide more financial and programming support to persons with disabilities and their families, which will help us achieve our goal of providing a full range of services and programs that help improve the lives of Nova Scotians with disabilities.

Our priorities for 2011-2012 will directly contribute to Government's larger commitment to make life better for Nova Scotians across the province. We will continue to work with our many stakeholders, partners and our government colleagues to continue to deliver programs and services that support Nova Scotians in need.

Regards,

Denise Peterson-Rafuse
Minister, Department of Community Services

David Ryan
A/Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services

1.0 DEPARTMENT MANDATE

The primary responsibility of the Department of Community Services is to ensure the basic needs of individuals and families are met by providing financial support to persons in need and by protecting children and adults at risk. Most of the department's expenditures are in the form of direct payments to clients in need of financial assistance or to service providers who provide residential, vocational, child care, housing, protection and other social services on behalf of the department. These services form a secure and predictable social safety net for Nova Scotians and help contribute to better futures for children and families, persons with disabilities, seniors, and communities.

Mission

The Department of Community Services is committed to a sustainable social support system that promotes the independence, self-reliance, and security of the people we serve. This will be achieved through excellence in service delivery, leadership, and collaboration with our partners.

Services are delivered under the authority and direction of the following legislation:

- Adoption Information Act
- Children and Family Services Act
- Day Care Act
- Disabled Persons Commission Act
- Employment Support and Income Assistance Act
- Homes for Special Care Act
- Housing Act
- Housing Development Corporation Act
- Senior Citizen's Financial Aid Act
- Social Assistance Act
- Social Workers Act

The department has three core business areas, i.e., collections of individual programs whose results and outcomes are fundamental to the department in carrying out its mandate.

Employment Support and Income Assistance

The focus of the Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) core business area is to provide financial assistance and supports for persons in need and to facilitate their movement towards employment, independence and self-sufficiency. Supports include:

- financial assistance for basic needs and special needs
- training and employability supports
- prescription drug coverage for Income Assistance recipients and children of low income families
- children's benefits for low income families.

Housing

Housing is the base upon which to provide other support services, and essential to supporting:

- healthy child development
- stable family relationships
- an environment conducive to life-long learning
- improvements in the health outcomes of Nova Scotians.

The department provides a range of housing programs to ensure that more households in Nova Scotia have access to safe, adequate, affordable and sustainable housing. The range of programs and services includes:

- provincial loan and mortgage programs
- grants for home repairs and home adaptations
- rental housing
- municipal property tax rebate program.

Family and Community Supports

This core business area focuses on the provision of safe and nurturing environments for children, youth and families to enable them to develop to their full potential. The presence of, and opportunity for, positive, supportive experiences in the early years in the home, the care environment, and the neighbourhood can promote optimal outcomes in a child's development including educational, linguistic, social, emotional, behavioural, and physical domains. Collaborative practices that enhance service delivery to children, youth and families are reinforced through the Child and Youth Strategy.

In addition to supporting people at various stages of their development and independence, a range of services for children and adults with an intellectual disability, a long-term mental illness, a physical disability, or some combination of the three are also available. Services are provided to eligible clients from a network of organizations across the province.

The range of programs and services delivered by the core business area includes:

- adoption and foster care programs
- child protection services
- support for children in care
- secure treatment
- early childhood development programs
- prevention services
- youth services and supports
- services for persons with disabilities

More information on the department's programs and services can be found on the department's website, http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/.

2.0 GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Government has identified three core policy priorities.

- Making health care better for you and your family, including improving the socio-economic determinants of health.
- Creating good jobs and growing the economy
- Get back to balance and ensuring government lives within its means

Community Services has aligned its planning with these priorities, and has identified a number of initiatives for 2011-12 to support government in meeting its stated policy objectives.

Priorities	Better Health Care	Jobs and the Economy	Live within Our Means
Income Support	✓		
Service Delivery Transformation	✓		✓
Alignment Labour Market Programs	✓	✓	✓
Improve Access to Disability Supports	✓		
Strategic Plan: Services for Persons with Disabilities	✓		
Child Welfare Redesign	✓		
Early Childhood Development	✓	✓	
Domestic Violence Action Plan	✓		
Accountability Framework for Community Based Programs			✓

Priority: Income Support

In 2011-2012 Community Services will move forward with a number of initiatives to strengthen income supports for low income Nova Scotians, including:

- enhancing the Nova Scotia Child Benefit
- improving personal allowances and wage incentives for Income Assistance recipients
- increasing foster care rates
- improving financial support for families with young disabled adults at home

Priority: Service Delivery Transformation

The Employment Support and Income Assistance Redesign Initiative will move into its next phase, the Service Delivery Transformation Project. The department envisions a service delivery structure with the client as the focal point, organized around service and process rather than program. This approach is strategic for improving overall organizational performance and improving service delivery to the many clients of the department. This is a multi-phased project, that will occur over the next 12-24 months.

The first phase will focus on assessment and research, engagement and consultation, and the development of a model focused on accessibility, clarity, efficiencies and effectiveness.

Priority: Alignment of Labour Market Programs

The department is refocusing employment support services to better meet the needs of Income Assistance recipients to overcome fundamental barriers such as life skills.

Directly connected to this development has been the creation of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE). LAE will play the lead role related to career development, advanced education and work force attachment programs.

A project is being initiated to support the implementation of these mandates in each department and to ensure a coordinated system is created to support individuals who may transition between the programs offered by Community Services and Labour and Advanced Education. This project will:

- clarify the life skills, essential skills and labour market development related roles of the two departments
- establish/ align a menu of services and a service delivery system for eligible Nova Scotians

- create a more seamless and transparent approach to meeting the needs of individuals accessing skills development, training and employment services from multiple departments and community agencies

- develop an evaluation framework including the articulation of performance outcomes and measures to assess the impact on Income Assistance recipients and other targeted individuals.

Priority: Strategic Plan: Services for Persons with Disabilities

Over the past several years the department's focus has been on the development and implementation of a number of new programs and services to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

In 2011-2012, with this strong foundation in place, we will begin development of a comprehensive strategic plan for the Services for Persons with Disabilities Program.

Priority: Improve Access to Disability Supports

In 2011-2012 Community Services will improve access to supports for persons with disabilities, by improving access to:

- the Independent Living and Alternative Family Support programs

- the Direct Family Support for Children program

- day programs for young disabled adults

The department will also begin the implementation of regional, interdisciplinary outreach teams. These teams will work with families and service providers, enabling them to better support family members with challenging behavioural needs.

Priority: Child Welfare Redesign

The department continues to take important steps towards the vision for child welfare - a single integrated service system, accessible and responsive to children and families across the province.

In 2011-2012, the department will construct an 18 bed (Level 3) Residential Treatment Centre on the grounds of the Wood Street Centre campus in Truro. It will provide assessment and treatment services to children and youth in the care of the Minister of Community Services. Medical and psychiatric services will be provided through an agreement with the District Health Authority.

Priority: Early Childhood Development

Community Services is committed to developing a licensed child care system that is accessible, affordable and sustainable. Research has shown that the provision of affordable and accessible licensed child care not only impacts life-long healthy development but also provides economic benefits - for every $1.00 invested, the return on investment is at least $2.00.

In 2011-2012, the department estimates it will invest approximately $47 million in the continuation of existing grants and programs, to

- increase the number of child care spaces
- repair & renovate child care facilities
- support wages and benefits
- help recruit and retain staff
- support family home day care
- support children with special needs
- help low income families with the cost of child care.

In addition to this ongoing programming, the department will be:

- adding 250 new child care subsidies to allow more Nova Scotia families to have access to affordable child care

- implementing the amendments to the Day Care Regulations, that come into effect April 1, 2011. Amendments reflect current best practices, increase educational/training requirements for child care staff, and increase the role of parents' participation in regulated child care.

Priority: Domestic Violence Action Plan

In 2011-2012, the Province will implement its first comprehensive action plan to address domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Action Plan was led by the Deputy Ministers' Leadership Committee on Family and Intimate Partner Violence and includes partners from 16 government entities. The Action Plan shows how government will work differently to sustain a focus on addressing domestic violence and to ensure that programs and services are responsive to the needs of those most closely affected by domestic violence. The plan outlines new government actions in ten broad areas, which focus on people who have experienced abuse, perpetrators of abuse, and at-risk families.

In 2011-2012, Community Services will:

- launch a new workplace initiative that promotes awareness of family violence and pilot two new programs for at risk populations
- promote the recently expanded provincial Helpline
- support regional case conferences
- increase the capacity of community based programs to support and mentor at-risk male youth and children
- develop standardized provincial practices and service agreements with men's intervention programs

- review early childhood development curriculum and incorporate more information about domestic violence if needed
- explore how supervised access and exchange can be enhanced and delivered in community-based agencies
- explore ways to address maintenance and energy efficiency issues in Transition Houses and Second-Stage Housing
- establish a research and evaluation partnership.

Priority: Accountability Framework for Funded Community-Based Programs

Over the past year, the department has been working collaboratively with community-based organizations to develop an accountability framework that includes service agreements, standards and reporting procedures.

This work will be completed in 2011-2012 and provide clarity around funding for core services and the associated outcomes. This work will also help facilitate the development of a comprehensive continuum of services for children, youth and families.

3.0 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Each year, the department provides a wide range of social services to 100,000 Nova Scotians, or over 15% of provincial population. Collectively these programs and services contribute to the achievement of the following outcomes:

- Nova Scotians are better able to support themselves and their families
- better access to adequate and affordable housing
- children, youth and families have a safe, secure and stable environment in which to grow and prosper
- persons with disabilities have access to the most appropriate supports to enhance their quality of life

As indicated in the following tables, several interrelated performance measures are used to help track progress towards achieving these results.

Outcome: Nova Scotians are better able to support themselves and their families

Measure / Rationale	Base Year Data	Targets	Trends	Strategic Priorities and Actions
Number and % of NS living in poverty (LICO) - identifies Nova Scotians who are at or below the low income cutoff	2006: 76,000; 8.4% of the NS population	reduce the number and % of NS living in poverty	2008: 75,000; 8.3% 2007: 74,000; 8.2%	- Increasing the Income Assistance Personal Allowance by $15 per month - Indexing the Affordable Living Tax Credit to keep pace with inflation - Indexing the Poverty Reduction Credit to keep pace with inflation - Increasing the Nova Scotia Child Benefit by 22% per month per child - Increasing Foster Care rates, for the second consecutive year, by 11% - Introducing transitional support for families with children transitioning from DFS to adulthood between 18 and 19 years - Introducing 250 new subsidies, making child care more accessible for struggling families - Amending the Income Assistance Wage Exemption policy to provide for a flat rate exemption of $150 per month - Doubling the flat rate exemption for those working in supported employment from $150 to $300 per month - Transferring skills development and employment services from Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) to Labour and Advanced Education
Number and % of children living in poverty (LICO) - identifies children who are at or below the low income cutoff	2006: 16,000; 8.7% of the NS children	reduce the number and % of children living in poverty	2008: 14,000; 7.9% 2007: 15,000; 8.4%	
Average monthly beneficiaries as a % of the NS population - represents the % of low income households dependent, in whole or in part, on Income Assistance to meet their basic needs in the context of the NS population	2005-06: 5.5% of the NS population	2011-12: 4.6% 2013-14: 4.5%	2010-11: 4.6% (Forecast) 2009-10: 4.6% 2008-09: 4.6% 2007-08: 4.8% 2006-07: 5.1%	
% of Income Assistance (IA) recipients with wage income - is an indication of recipients with labour market attachment and their ability to achieve a greater degree of self-reliance and independence	2010-11: 9.2%	2011-12: 9.5% 2013-14: 10%		

Measure / Rationale	Base Year Data	Targets	Trends	Strategic Priorities and Actions
% of youth (16 - 24) receiving Income Assistance assisted to enhance their employability - youth in financial need have opportunities to transition to employment and self-reliance	2005-06: 30.7% of youth assisted	2011-12: 43% 2013-14: 45%	2010-11: 42% (Forecast) 2009-10: 40% 2008-09: 37% 2007-08: 37.5% 2006-07: 34.4%	Actively work with other federal and provincial departments to maximize access to available programs for youth in receipt of Income Assistance. Local projects will be supported that provide direct services for youth in the areas of skills development, education and employment.

Outcome: Better access to adequate and affordable housing

Measure/ Rationale	Base Year Data	Targets	Trends	Strategic Priorities and Actions
Number and % of households unable to access acceptable housing (core housing need) - represents households that fall below adequacy, suitability or affordability standards	2006: 43,800 households; representing 12.1% of all NS households	decrease the number and % of households unable to access acceptable housing	2006: NB - 10.3% PE - 12.6% NL - 14.2%	Work will continue on the completion of all the remaining funded housing projects under the housing stimulus plan. Finalize negotiations to secure funding through to March 31, 2014 for the Affordable Housing and Renovation Rehabilitation Assistance Programs.
% of co-operative housing organizations that move from a default position (project in difficulty) to a healthy, functioning coop - in terms of financial, democratic and physical condition	2010-11: 28% of co-operative housing organizations are in a default position	2011-12: reduce to 19% in default 2013-14: reduce to 10% in default		Monitor the compliance of co-operatives with loan agreements under the Social Housing Assistance Repair Program.
Number of households assisted with health and safety related home repairs - number of existing affordable homes preserved in good condition, and adapted to make the housing more accessible so low income households can continue to live independently in their own homes.	2005-06: 2,429 households	2011-12:[1] 2,000 2013-14: 2,000	2010-11: 2,100 2009-10: 2,150 2008-09: 2,355 2007-08:2,400 2006-07: 2,540	Finalize negotiations to secure funding through to March 31, 2014 for the Affordable Housing and Renovation Rehabilitation Assistance Programs.
Public housing vacancy rate - measure of the department's capacity to accommodate the demand for public housing	Base year to be establish for 2010-11 - TBD	2011-12: 3% vacancy rate		Review, identify and implement changes to internal processes, systems and standards to ensure that vacant units are available to rent in a timely manner.

[1] This target reflects an increase in the size of the grants allowing for deeper coverage but fewer grants. In the fall 2010, the grant assistance for the Provincial Housing Emergency Repair Program and the Senior Citizens Assistance Program was increased from $5,000 to $6,500.

Outcome: Children, youth and families have a safe, secure and stable environment in which to grow and prosper

Measure/ Rationale	Base Year Data	Targets	Trends	Strategic Priorities and Actions
Number of children in care placed for adoption - it is in a child's best interest to be placed for adoption as quickly as possible as secure stable family environment is an important factor in healthy child development	2005-06: 116 children	2011-12: 105 or more children 2013-14: 105 or more children	2010-11:TBD 2009-10: 125 2008-09: 121 2007-08: 105 2006-07: 87	Audit permanency planning for every child in permanent care to better assess their needs and their adoption readiness. Pilot family group conferencing project which will target older children in permanent care to reconnect to extended family.
Number of spaces[2] in regulated child care settings - is a measure of the department's commitment to provide safe child care	2006-07: 13,249 spaces	2011-12: 15,418 2013-14: 15,620	2010-11: 15,245 2009-10: 14,485 2008-09: 14,135 2007-08: 13,455	Grants to licensed child care facilities will continue to provide support for salaries and some operational costs. Provision of financial assistance for pre and post service education to early childhood staff to pursue training in early childhood education, enables the recruitment of students and retention of staff in the field of early education, further enabling facilities to meet regulatory requirements and provide a quality early childhood environment. New or expanded child care facilities, funded through the Department's Expansion Loan program, will complete construction and open.

[2]To better measure the capacity of the child care system, this measure was changed to include both full and part time spaces.

Measure/ Rationale	Base Year Data	Targets	Trends	Strategic Priorities and Actions
% of child care spaces subsidized - an indicator of the availability of child care for low income families	2006-07: 23% (3,045 subsidies) of licensed child care spaces were subsidized	2011-12: 28.7% (4,427) 2013-14: 28.3% (4,427)	2010-11: 27% (4,177) 2009-10: 27% (3,925) 2008-09: 24% (3,425) 2007-08: 23% (3,154)	Create an additional 250 subsidies in 2011-2012.
Number of families with children with a disability participating in the Direct Family Support program - enables a family to care for a disabled child at home benefitting from all aspects of family and community living	2005-06: 1,104	2011-12: 1,050 2013-14: TBD	2010-11: 952[3] 2009-10: 952 2008-09: 1,044 2007-08: 1,082 2006-07: 1,133	Revising income eligibility guidelines so more low to modest income families can qualify.

[3] This decreasing trend reflects the aging of children out of the Direct Family Support program for children to the adult program.

Outcome: Persons with disabilities have access to the most appropriate supports to enhance their quality of life

Measure	Base Year Data	Target	Trends	Strategic Priorities and Actions
Number of clients served by adult service centres - measures the department's ability to provide access to programs that will enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities	2006-07: 1,770 clients	2011-12: 2,000 2013-14: 2,100	2010-11: 1,950 2009-10: 1,950 2008-09: 1,870 2007-08: 1,770	Expanding the Adult Service Centre programs to support individuals with very high needs.
Number of SPD licensed facilities with escalated non-compliance - measure of the quality of SPD licensed facilities	2010-11: TBD	2011-12: TBD 2013-14: TBD		Building an IT system to better track and monitor compliance to licensing requirements. Provide consultative support to operators to address compliance issues.
Founded cases of abuse as a % of the total number of referral cases - measure of the safety of licensed SPD facilities	2010-11: TBD	2011-12: TBD 2012-13: TBD		Improve communication and education on the protection of persons in care through brochures, website, training and a consultation line.
Licensing turn around time for processing initial licenses, renewals, and change requests- measure of the department's performance in meeting government's 10 day service standard	2010 -2011: TBD	2011-12: TBD 2012-13: TBD		Building an IT system to increase efficiencies in the process. Provide operators with guidance and support when completing licensing applications.

4.0 BUDGET CONTEXT

Community Services			
	2010-2011 Estimate	**2010-2011 Forecast**	**2011-2012 Estimate**
Program & Service Area	($thousands)	($thousands)	($thousands)
Gross Departmental Expenses:			
Senior Management	2,007	1,513	1,556
Corporate Services Unit	11,322	9,417	10,891
Policy and Information Management	6,282	6,754	8,292
Field Offices	12,634	12,522	13,915
Services For Persons with Disabilities	243,851	246,028	254,786
Family and Children's Services	199,767	186,060	192,444
Housing Services	129,915	126,396	123,697
Employment Support and Income Assistance	357,857	359,789	370,776
Housing Authority and Property Operations	7,927	8,189	8,727
Total Departmental Expenses	971,562	956,668	985,084
TCA Purchase Requirements	1,450	300	1,200
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	1,606	1,578	1,679